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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TAL AFAR SITREP: SEPT. 11, 2005

Classified By: Political-Military Affairs Counselor David C. Litt
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

-- (S) Operation Restoring Rights is ongoing as Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), backed by Coalition Forces (CF), are conducting house-to-house searches in the Sarai neighborhood. Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) resistance is diminishing, with much of its leadership on the run. Many AIF are attempting to escape to the southeast, although lower-level AIF are told to fight to the death.

-- (S) Casualties since September 10, according to MNF-I, are: 0 civilians killed or wounded; 2 AIF killed; 15 AIF detained.

-- (S) AIF leadership has apparently moved from Sarai neighborhood to Qadisiyah neighborhood.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

-- (SBU) Prime Minister al-Jaafari ordered the Rabiya border crossing (60 km from Tal Afar) closed to commercial traffic in an attempt to stop the flow of insurgents and supplies from Syria.

-- (SBU) The ITG will send representatives to Tal Afar on Sept. 12 to discuss humanitarian assistance and rebuilding the Tal Afar police with local government and sheiks.

HUMANITARIAN/REFUGEE DEVELOPMENTS

-- (U) USAID/OFDA/IMC relief efforts are ongoing. OFDA reports a major concern at this point is food supplies. Many displaced people will not eat Humanitarian Daily Rations as they do not find them to be an acceptable food and also distrust their safety and origin. The potential for a food crisis to arise is real.

-- (SBU) Charge' met with Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) President Masood Barzani, who said there would be no problem with allowing Turkish-donated humanitarian relief supplies to cross the Iraqi border and pass through KRG-controlled areas.

-- (U) We have confirmed the Turks are preparing to send 120 tons of food, 30 tons of water, 500 tents, and 2 trucks of medical supplies to Tal Afar. One convoy left Ankara this morning and will arrive at the Habur Gate crossing Tuesday evening. A second convoy carrying additional relief supplies is scheduled to depart Ankara Tuesday morning. It is possible the first convoy will wait for the second to catch up before entering Iraq. Details are being confirmed.

-- (U) Iraqi Police have screened 3259 citizens at the Displaced Civilian Rest Area since Sep 1, of which 47 remained at the rest area.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEVELOPMENTS

-- (U) MNF-I will hold a press conference this afternoon (Baghdad time) to update the international press on Tal Afar developments. We expect wide media coverage of this press conference.

-- (U) Local press coverage has generally been favorable, stressing the ITG's role in leading operations. However, the website of the Iraqi Association of Muslim Scholars is referring to the operation as a "massacre" and calls it Jafari's Falluja.
Satterfield